

Message Text

SECRET

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11
ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 IO-03 SP-02 PM-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7241
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONGEN HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
USUN 602
CINCPAC

S E C R E T MANILA 11675

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CH, RP
SUBJECT: IMELDA MARCOS'S TRIP TO CHINA: PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

REF: MANILA 10988

1. SINCE SECRETARY KISSINGER IS MEETING WITH PHILIPPINE
FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO IN NEW YORK ON MORNING OCTOBER
1, I AM SUBMITTING THIS PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF IMELDA
MARCOS TRIP TO CHINA AS BACKGROUNDER FOR HIS
BRIEFING BOOK. I HAVE HAD ONLY BRIEF, PUBLIC CHAT WITH MRS.
MARCOS AT AIRPORT ON HER RETURN LAST EVENING. I HAVE NOT
RPT NOT HAD CHANCE TO COMPARE NOTES WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS
SINCE HER RETURN. ONCE WE HAVE CHANCE TO DO MORE CONSIDERED
APPRAISAL OF TRIP, EMBASSY WILL SUBMIT A MORE CAREFULLY

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PREPARED ANALYSIS.

2. LAVISH HOSPITALITY AND SINGULAR HONORS WHICH PEKING SHOWERED ON MRS. MARCOS DURING HER NINE DAY TRIP TO CHINA INDICATE PRIORITY WHICH CHINESE LEADERSHIP ATTACHES TO NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH PHILIPPINES. IT IS ASSUMED THAT THIS PRIORITY IN TURN REFLECTS IMPORTANCE WHICH CHINA ATTACHES TO ESTABLISHING ITSELF FIRMLY IN THE ASEAN CAPITALS AS THE SOLE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE AND AS A MAJOR POWER WITH MAJOR INTERESTS IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION.

3. ALTHOUGH MRS. MARCOS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN FLATTERED AND DOUBTLESS INFLUENCED BY ALL THE ATTENTION SHE HAS RECEIVED, PRESIDENT MARCOS, FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST, HAS APPRAISED THE CHINA TRIP WITH A COLD AND SHREWD EYE. HE HAS TOLD ME THAT HE ASSUMES PEKING IS PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS WITH RESPECT TO THE PHILIPPINES FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, THE PHILIPPINES IS THE NEXT LOGICAL ASEAN CANDIDATE FOR NORMALIZATION AFTER MALAYSIA, SINCE THAILAND IS STILL PREOCCUPIED WITH DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. SECOND, PEKING RECOGNIZES THAT TIES BETWEEN MANILA AND TAIPEI ARE EXTREMELY CLOSE AND WILL REQUIRE A LITTLE EXTRA PUSH TO RUPTURE EFFECTIVELY.

4. I HAVE REPORTED EARLIER (REFTEL) MY FEELING THAT MARCOS PERSONALLY WILL WISH TO NEGOTIATE THE TERMS INVOLVED IN ANY NORMALIZATION PACKAGE. THE IMPLIED INVITATION TO HIM FROM MAO TSE-TUNG, WHICH MRS. MARCOS MENTIONED IN HER AIRPORT STATEMENT UPON RETURN TO MANILA, WILL GIVE AN ADDED FILLIP TO THIS WISH. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE UNCHARACTERISTIC OF HIM TO PLUNGE HEADLONG INTO SUCH AN UNDERTAKING WITHOUT CAREFULLY PREPARING THE GROUND BOTH IN PEKING AND TAIPEI.

5. AS FAR AS TAIPEI IS CONCERNED, MARCOS INTENDS TO DISENGAGE FROM GOP-GRC RELATIONS AS PAINLESSLY AS HE CAN; BUNEHE RECOGNIZES THIS WILL NOT BE EASY. HE HIMSELF HOPES TO KEEP AS MANY "INFORMAL" RELATIONS WITH TAIPEI AS THE GRC WILL PERMIT. HE WOULD PARTICULARLY LIKE TO WORK OUT SOME WAY IN WHICH CHINESE RESIDENTS OF THE PHILIPPINES CAN MAINTAIN GRC CITIZENSHIP RATHER THAN BEING FORCED TO BECOME

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EITHER FILIPINOS OR CITIZENS OF THE PRC.

6. THE WHOLE PREPARATORY PROCESS MAY THEREFORE TAKE SOME TIME, EVEN THOUGH MARCOS WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO WORK IT OUT WHILE MAO AND CHOU ARE STILL ON THE SCENE IN PEKING. SINCE IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THE PROJECT HAS THEIR FULSOME BLESSING, HE MAY WISH TO STEP UP HIS REQUIREMENTS FOR SOME ASSURANCE THAT PRC SUPPORT TO MAOIST REBELS IN THE PHILIPPINES

WILL CEASE. HE WILL DOUBTLESS PURSUZOMIS REQUIREMENT THROUGH DISAVOWABLE INTERMEDIARIES, SUCH AS FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO, RATHER THAN DIRECTLYM ROMULO IS ITCHING FOR A VISIT TO PEKING.

7. THE OTHER ELEMENT IN THE MARCOS APPROACH TO PEKING LIES IN HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS MOSCOW. HE HAS REPEATEDLY SAID HE WISHES RELATIONS WITH PEKING AND MOSCOW TO BE OPENED MORE OR LESS SIMULTANEOUSLY. I BELIEVE HE CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT ATTENDANCE BY MRS. MARCOS AT THE OCTOBER 1 FESTIVITIES BECAUSE HE FEARED SHE WOULD FIGURE TOO PROMINENTLY IN ATTACKS ON THE SOVIETS WHICH HE FULLY EXPECTS THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP TO MAKE ON THAT OCCASION. ESSENTIALLY, HOWEVER, THE SOVIET MOVE WILL BE AN EASY ONEM PERHAPS THE ONLY HURDLE THAT NEEDS TO BE OVERCOME IN THIS EXERCISE WILL BE THE EFFECTIVE NEUTRALIZATION OF THE MOSCOW-ORIENTED BRANCH OF THE LOCAL COMMUNIST DISSIDENTS. MOSCOW WILL PROBABLY BE PREPAREYATO COOPERATE IN THIS ENDEAVOR SO THAT PEKINGOLILL BE CONSPICUOUSLY ISOLATED IF IT FAILS TO GIVE MARCOS SATLSFACTION ON THE QUESTION OF PRC SUPPORT TO THE MAOISTS.

8. CONSEQUENTLY, ALTHOUGH IMELDA MARCOS HAS GIVEN THD MOVEMENT TOWARDS NORMALIZATION WITH THE PRC A VERY DRAMATIC SHOVE FOREARD, HER SHREWD AND SKEPTICAL HUSBAND WILL WISH TO SEE ALL THE PIECES FITTED FAR MORE CAREFULLY TOGETHER BEFORE HE TAKES THE FINAL PLUNGE. THIS MAY TAKE A LITTLE MORE TIME THAN IS POPULARLY SUPPOSED, BUT THE PATTERN IS CLEARLY INEXORABLE.
SULLIVAN

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